

Message Text

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12

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 W

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R 141739Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9827

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 0949

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PN, PFOR, PINT

SUBJ: PANAMANIAN POLITICAL INFIGHTING

SUMMARY. FOREIGN MINISTER TACK IS REPORTEDLY ATTEMPTING TO

DISCREDIT AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ REVILLA AND THEREBY REMOVE HIM FROM THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, ACCORDING TO SOURCE WHO HAS BEEN VERY RELIABLE IN PAST. ALTHOUGH OUR SOURCE CLAIMS TACK'S MOTIVATION IS TO DISRUPT THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS, WE SUSPECT THAT JEALOUSY AND INTERNAL POLITICAL INFIGHTING ARE INVOLVED. WE HAVE NO OTHER INDICATION THAT TACK DESIRES TO SEE THE NEGOTIATIONS FAIL. END SUMMARY.

1. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCE CLOSE TO TOP GOP OFFICIALS, FOREIGN MINISTER TACK IS MOVING TO CUT AMBASADOR GONZALEZ REVILLA OUT OF THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS. ALLEGEDLY THE U S GOT SOMETHING FROM GONZALEZ IN THE 8 PRINCIPLES WHICH HE CANNOT EXPLAIN. TACK REPORTEDLY INFORMED TORRIJOS THAT GONZALEZ DECEIVED HIM CONCERNING THE U S INTERPRETATION OF ONE OF THE 8 PRINCIPLES. AS A RESULT, BEGINNING FEBRUARY 7 THE PANAMANIAN PRESS WAS ORDERED THAT GONZALEZ' NAME AND PICTURE WERE NO LONGER TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEGOTIATIONS. HIS BUDGET FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN CUT AND HIS CHOICE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPAL OFFICER, MARIO ROGNONI, HAS BEEN REJECTED BY TACK. (ROGNONI IS A MEMBER OF THE GROUP OF YOUNG OLIGARCHS WHO CONFIDENTIAL

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SUPPORT THE GOP.) THE DCM APPROVED BY TACK IS TO BE JAIME VALDEZ.

2. THE SOURCE, WHO IS A FRIEND OF GONZALEZ, INSISTS THAT TACK'S

PURPOSE IS TO SABOTAGE THE NEGOTIATIONS. HE SOUGHT U S ASSIST-
ANCE IN REINFORCING GONZALEZ' POSITION. OUR ANSWER WAS THAT
WHATEVER THE MERITS OF THE CASE, IT WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE FOR
THE U S TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN AN INTERNAL PANAMANIAN AFFAIR, AND
IN ANY EVENT, ANY SHOW OF U S FAVOR TOWARD GONZALEZ WOULD
PROBABLY HURT HIM.

3. COMMENT. WHILE IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE, AND EVEN PROBABLE,
THAT TACK IS MOVING TO UNDERCUT GONZALEZ NOW THAT THE AGREEMENT
ON PRINCIPLES HAS BEEN CONCLUDED, WE HAVE NO INDICATION, OTHER
THAN THE SOURCE'S ASSERTION, THAT TACK'S MOTIVATION MIGHT BE TO
DISRUPT THE NEGOTIATIONS. IT IS MORE PROBABLE THAT JEALOUSY AND
TRADITIONAL PANAMANIAN POLITICAL INFIGHTING ARE BEHIND THIS.
TACK'S ACTION MAY ALSO REFLECT A WIDESPREAD AND CORRECT VIEW J
THAT GONZALEZ LACKS AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE KEY FEATURES OF THE
CANAL AND DEFENSE RELATIONSHIP AND THAT PANAMA CANNOT RISK ERRORS
OR THE DELAY INVOLVED IN EDUCATING HIM.
SAYRE

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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